

# *The harlot and the chimera in the songs of the troubadour Marcobru*

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The harlot and the chimera in the songs of the troubadour  
Marcabru

Marcabru is among the earliest troubadours whose works have survived. His literary career appears to have begun in Poitiers and covers the period c.1130-c.1150, during which time he travelled widely in South Western France and Northern Spain. The most striking feature of his surviving poems - 42 in number - is the scathing attacks they contain. Marcabru rails against 'false love' (*Amars*) and adultery, the treacherous nature of women, and has many harsh criticisms to make of the *seigneurs* of the Midi and Northern Spain. It is the intention in this paper to consider one particular and important aspect of Marcabru's songs, the negative images and representation of love and women in his works, and to concentrate on the figure of the harlot, the *puta*, in the light of what W.D. Paden observed to be the 'pervasive ambiguity of reference' which distinguished the language of troubadour poetry.<sup>1</sup> It will be suggested that the term *puta* in Marcabru's songs takes on several layers of meaning which the troubadour exploits in order to convey his message dramatically and that this exploitation involves use of symbols, the traditions of biblical exegesis and the 'colours' of rhetoric.

Whilst this paper will be concerned first and foremost with Marcabru's song 'Soudadier, per cui es Jovens', it is necessary to consider these layers of meaning and Marcabru's exploitation of them within the context of his ethical or moral position.<sup>2</sup> One of the clearest and most explicit expositions of this can be found in his song 'Doas cuidas ai, compaigner', in which he distinguishes between two ways of thinking. *Bona cuida*, a clear-sighted, integral moral rectitude, is difficult to attain (stanza 2), but *folla cuida* represents an illusory, muddled outlook which 'mène au dérèglement, à la lubricité, au vice'.<sup>3</sup> 'Les réverbérations de cette doctrine se sentent dans toute l'oeuvre de Marcabru' (Ricketts, p.179) and it establishes the system of values according to which Marcabru judges his fellow men. As far as the application of these values to love is concerned, as Scheludko has remarked,

die *bona cuida* ist erfüllt, wenn man sich an die wahre Liebe hält, die *folla cuida* haben demgegenüber diejenigen, die der *amor volatgier* folgen.<sup>4</sup>

Elsewhere in his songs Marcabru appears to represent certain frankly promiscuous, unprincipled aspects of *amor volatgier*, fickle love, by the term *Putia*, and thus the notion of whoredom and the figure of the *puta* are integral to the poet's ethical framework.<sup>5</sup>

An example of this can be found in Poem XXXIV, where Marcabru uses the term *puta* figuratively. The poet complains of those people who

betray Cortesia and says:

Ja Dieus no.l sia perdonans  
Qui las vol onrar ni servir,  
Estas putas ardens cremans  
Pejors que ieu no.us saubra dir. (29-32)

('May God never forgive the man who wishes to serve or pay  
homage to those ardent, burning whores, worse than I would  
know how to tell you.')

These women are treacherous (line 22), making their husbands bring up and care for children fathered by other men (stanza 4). Marcabru makes the same criticism of women in several other songs.<sup>6</sup> But the poet reproaches the putas particularly because

Tan lor sap bo la clau colpar,  
Que non hi guardon dreg ni tort,  
Mas selh que mielhs las sap ronsar! (XXXIV 33-35)

('It pleases them so much to cover the nail that they pay no  
heed to right or wrong, but only to the man who knows best  
how to roll them over.')

As P. Falk has noted, the phrase lo clau colpar has a 'sens obscène en parlant de la femme'.<sup>7</sup> It would seem that these women are at fault because they are so anxious to satisfy their lusts that they pay no attention to questions of morality - or perhaps to the courtly qualities and virtues (dreg ni tort) - which should determine their relationships and, instead of choosing the most worthy lover, give themselves to the most virile. As Marcabru says of their favours,

... aytans s'en aura us truans  
O mais, si mais li post bastir. (XXXIV 38-39)<sup>8</sup>

('A rogue would get as much from them, or more, if he could  
labour more.')

In this way the women fail to behave according to the high standards of a true domna (although in lines 22, 37 and 41 Marcabru uses this term) but act instead with the lack of discrimination of a prostitute. Their crimes against the secular ethic of fin'amors are so great that even the men who serve them are not deserving of God's pardon (lines 29-30). The context makes it clear that the poet is not discussing actual prostitutes but rather women who behave in

an uncourtly way. They betray fin'amors.

This is how the *Breviari d'Amor*, with reference to Marcabru's Poem XXXI, terms a woman who loves a garson d'ostal:

E pert nom de dona gentil,  
E pren nom de putana vil. 9

('She loses the name of noble lady, and takes that of vile whore.')

So Marcabru designates the promiscuous, unprincipled woman as 'whore', using the misogynistic lieu-commun of female insatiability to represent his strong disapproval. This is an example of what K. Blumstein has seen as the moral overtones of misogynistic elements in courtly literature, when these are intended 'to instruct by negative example'.<sup>10</sup> Marcabru describes a woman's unacceptable conduct using coarse, striking language and defines, only by implication, how a truly courtly woman should behave.<sup>11</sup> The term puta in these instances takes on the meaning of 'woman who behaves in an uncourtly way'.

The most famous example of Marcabru's use of the figure of the puta is found in the song 'Soudadier, per cui es Jovens'. Scholars have deplored the state of the text: at least one stanza appears to be missing and, of the total of nine preserved, stanzas 7-9 are found in one manuscript only.<sup>12</sup> This renders a sustained examination of the poem as a whole difficult, but it is nevertheless possible to put forward several observations, taking as a basis for these a suggested new reading of the song.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 | Soudadier, per cui es Jovens<br>Mantengutz e Jois eisamens,<br>Entendetz los mals argumens         |
| 4 | De las falsas putas ardens;<br>En puta qui s'i fia<br>Es hom traïtz;<br>Lo fols, quan cuid.il ria, |
| 8 | Es escarnitz.  |

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- II Salamos ditz et es guirens,  
C'al prim es dousa cum pimens,  
Mas al partir es plus cozens,  
12 Amar'e cruzels cum serpens;  
Tant sap de tricharia  
La pecairitz  
Que cel qu'ab leis se lia,  
16 S'en part marritz.
- III De [G]uimerra porta semblan  
Qu'es serps detras, leos denan,  
Bocs en miei loc, que.l fai trian  
20 De caval bai e d'aurifan;  
Qui despei la bestia  
Non es faillitz  
D'aquo que entendia  
24 De la traairitz.
- IV Puta sembla leo d'aitan:  
Fers es d'ergueill al comensan,  
Mas pueis quan n'a fag son talan,  
28 Tro que son mil no.s prez'un gan.  
Quar soven per putia  
Put la metritz,  
Cum fai per bocaria  
32 Carnils poiritz.
- V En talant ai que vos decli  
L'us de putana serpenti  
Que pan'a l'auzel son pouzi;  
36 [E] sab l'auzels [s]'ab leis s'afi,  
Can l'a feita bauzia  
De sos noiritz,  
Aten com per leis sia  
40 Mortz o delitz.
- VI Eisamen qui sec son traï  
Fai del ric putana frairi;  
Quan n'a trag la bresch'e.l saï,  
44 Li fai de la lengua bossi;  
Ben es de gran folia  
Sals e gueritz  
Qui.s destol de sa via  
48 Ans qu'ela.l fitz.

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- VII Putan'es de tan mal engenh  
C'ab dous parlar cueill et asenh  
Totz cels que pot metr'en congrenh;  
52 Quan l'avens faill, de si. l[s] enpenh;  
Donx qui de sa paria  
Es encobitz  
Soven mud'e cambia  
56 L'enfoletitz.

(Missing stanza ?)

- VIII Savis senatz lai no s'enpen,  
Si lo ten car ni l'onra ben,  
Quan l'aura fag de blanc moren,  
60 No. l torn de roal en bazen.  
Totz es de garsonia  
.....  
Qui met gran manentia  
64 Pel cap puditz.

- IX Puta per usatge.s defen  
Al ric, si gran loguier no. n pren  
Lai on l'arbalesta desten.  
68 On sap lo pa e vi aten  
Molt fai gran glotonia  
La trichairitz,  
Quan los pros lais'e tria  
72 Los acha'itz.

- I Soudadier, by whom Jois and similarly Jovens are maintained, listen to the evil arguments of the false, burning whores; the man who trusts a whore is betrayed; the fool, when he believes she is smiling at him, is deceived (or 'in fact, is scorned').
- II Solomon says, and he bears witness to it, that at first she is sweet like spiced wine, but at the parting she is more caustic, bitter and cruel than a snake ('s bite). The sinner (puta) knows so much about trickery that he who associates closely with her leaves her a distressed man.
- III She bears a likeness to the Chimera, which has the back end of a snake, the front of a lion and the middle of a goat, which distinguishes it from the bay horse and the elephant. He who described the beast was not mistaken in what he understood (or 'heard') about the traitress.

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- IV      The whore resembles a lion in this much: at the beginning she is fierce with pride, but when she has had her will of them (her lovers), until there are a thousand of them, she does not value herself as highly as a glove. For often, through her whoring, the prostitute stinks like rotten meat in a sheep-slaughterer's.
- V        I have a mind to explain to you the ways of the snake-like whore (or 'the snake-like ways of the whore'), who robs the bird of its chicks, and the bird knows that, if it associates with her, when she has tricked it at its young, it must wait to see in what manner it will be killed or destroyed by her.
- VI       Similarly, the whore turns the rich/noble man who follows in her train into a pauper; when she has taken the sweetness (honey) and fat (lard) from him, she sticks out her tongue at him in derision. He is indeed safe and cured of great folly (madness), the man who turns aside from her path before she seizes on him.
- VII      The whore is so evil and deceitful that with sweet talk she welcomes and reasons with all those she can put to work. When the money runs out she pushes them away from her. Therefore she often swops and changes the bewitched fool who is greedy for her company.
- VIII     The wise man with sense does not trouble himself with her, for if she holds him dear or has consideration for him, when she has changed him (it?) from white to black, she will not transform him from Roal to Bazen (from an uncourtly man to a courtly one?). All this is knavery ((and he is a fool) who spends great riches on a reeking head?).
- IX       The whore usually withholds herself from the rich/noble man unless she gets a big reward for it (or 'from him') there where she fires the crossbow. (In the place) where she knows that bread and wine are waiting the traitress behaves in a very greedy way indeed, when she leaves the worthy men (pros) and chooses (instead) the worthless wretches (acha'itz).

### Notes:

Order of stanzas adapted from Lewent, p.448. The song appears in five manuscripts: A, I, K, E and N; stanzas 5 and 6 are in E and N only, and stanzas 7-9 in E alone.

- Line 1. Soudadier: Hoepffner and Boissonnade believed that this song was composed for an audience of rough soldiers and mercenaries, but compare Appel's explanation in the text below. (E. Hoepffner, Les Troubadours dans leur vie et dans leurs oeuvres, Paris 1955, p.38, and P. Boissonnade, 'Les personnages et les événements de l'histoire d'Allemagne, de France et d'Espagne dans l'oeuvre de Marcabru', Romania, 48, 1922, 207-243 (229).)
- Line 2. Mantengutz: Appel's interpretation of soudadier is possibly underlined by Marcabru's use of the word mantengutz in this context. These expressions seem to imply a system of relationships in which Jois and Jovens are likened to segner who depend upon their trusted, faithful and paid retainers for their continued seigneurie. These retainers would be 'paid' with the spiritual, moral rewards which come to those people - fin'amans and troubadours, for example - who serve Jois and Jovens. Similar examples of such images of service are to be found in Poems XXXI lines 64-67; XVIII lines 7-12; XVIII ms C st.14; XXXII lines 61-63.
- Lines 3-4. These lines have been interpreted as 'the bad things said about the whores' by Appel and Hoepffner but, when this passage is considered in the light of lines 49-51, it becomes evident that Marcabru is referring to the sweet, specious, evil arguments used by the putas themselves. See L.M. Paterson, Troubadours and Eloquence, Oxford 1975, p.9: she translates lines 50-51: 'with sweet speech she welcomes and reasons with all those she can put to work'.
- Line 5. See Roncaglia, Cortesamen, line 28: 'e per un no s'i vol fiar'.
- Line 8. Is there perhaps a double meaning here: the fool, when he believes she is smiling at him favourably to encourage him, is in fact being mocked by the woman, and he is deceived, misled by this impression? (See M. Raynouard, Lexique Roman, Paris 1836-44, III, 190, and E. Levy, Provenzalisches Supplement-Wörterbuch, Leipzig 1894-1924, III, 156.)
- Line 9. Marcabru refers to Solomon by name in Poems VI line 32 and XXIX line 25, and he alludes in XVII line 4 and XVIII line 63 to the testimony of the Bible.
- Line 10. Compare Proverbs 23.27-33.



- Lines 17-19. One of the sources of medieval references to the chimera was Ovid, Metamorphoses, IX.647: 'quoque Chimera iugo mediis in partibus hircum pectus et ora leae, caudam serpentis habebat'. But there are two versions of Ovid's description, as G. Errante points out (p.225). The other reads: 'mediis in partibus ignem, pectus et ora leae'. Dejeanne's reading of bous is rejected because a 'boeuf' does not appear in any account of the chimera, but scholars differ over the emendation. Errante's suggestion of fuocs on the basis of ignem accords well with the notion of the lustful puta and is reminiscent of several other instances of the similarly Ovidian image of physical desire in Marcabru's works (see Poems V lines 31-36, VIII lines 11-15, XXXI lines 13-15 and 55-63). However, the goat was also a common symbol of lust, used in Poem XVII line 31 to describe lecherous, adulterous husbands: 'Moillerat, ab sen cabri' (see D. Nelson, 'Animal imagery in Marcabru's poetry', Studies in Medieval Culture, 11, 1974, 51-55). Appel suggested bocs on the basis of hircum in Ovid and justified this emendation by pointing out that as the lion and the snake elements find their continuation and gloss in the following stanzas, the explanation of the middle section of the chimera is found in stanza 4, suitably sandwiched between the references to the lion and the snake, in lines 29-32 (Appel, p.422). He suggested

Bocaria wird hier im ursprünglichen Sinn als  
Fleischstand der Bockschlachter zu nehmen sein,

and noted that

Hs E liest im letzten Vers, aber mit Mangel einer  
Silbe, Box poiritz.

Did perhaps the scribe of ms E take it upon himself to correct line 32 to accord with an allusion he recognised, although his correction damaged the metre? In support of Appel's suggestion, it should be noted that ms I appears to have Bouc in line 19. The editors of Horace's Odes at I, 27, 24 noted that 'the word [chimera] is Greek and denotes a she-goat' (Horace: Odes Book I, p.61, ed. A.H. Allcroft and B.J. Hayes, London 1890).

- Line 20. caval bai e d'aurifan: Appel believed that these allusions were included as mere stopgaps, inserted with the rhythmic continuity of the stanza in mind (p.457). Perhaps it is the chimera as a whole, and not merely the lion and snake elements, which is contrasted with the horse and elephant. It would then be the composite nature of the chimera which distinguishes it from the equally

exotic elephant and from the horse, which was sometimes represented in bestiaries as a symbol of licentiousness (see Marcabru's Poem XVIII lines 49-54). Is it possible that d'aurifan is a scribal error for d'alferan, 'cheval d'une qualité supérieure' (E. Levy, Petit Dictionnaire Provençal-Français, Heidelberg 1971<sup>5</sup>)? If so, Marcabru may then be comparing the fantastic chimera and two different types of horse.

- Line 21. See A. Pillet, 'Zum Texte von Marcabrus Gedichten', in 89 Jahresbericht der Schlesischen Gesellschaft für vaterländische Cultur, Breslau 1911, p.17 on despeis.

- Lines 27- Appel (p.427) translated these lines:  
28.

'Doch wenn sie ihre Lust an Euch gebüßt, hñlt sie sich  
nicht eines Handschuhs Wert, bis ihrer tausend sind',

but there may be an alternative reading. Ms A is the only one to transmit 'tro que son mil'; mss I and K both have 'tro queis humil', and ms N gives 'tro que sumil', while E has 'tro ques humil'. All four, that is, give some variation of '(h)umil'. Could this not have something to do with 'to humble oneself' or 'to be humbled'? This stanza can be compared to stanza 2, which begins with a general statement: 'Salamon ditz et es guirens' line 9 (compare 'Puta sembla leo d'aitan', line 25), then goes on to describe the initial aspect of the puta: 'C'al prim' (compare line 26, 'al comensan'), which is in sharp contrast (Mas in the initial position in both lines 11 and 27) to the reality which is later revealed ('al partir', line 11, and 'pueis quan', line 27). The sweetness described in stanza 2 becomes 'cozens, amar'e cruzels' and in stanza 4 the puta's initial leonine ferocity and pride could then be contrasted to s'(h)umil. Does she humble herself (s'umiliar), or is she humbled (giving sia umil)? As the troubadour Cercamon says:

Anc res no fo no s'umelis  
Vas Amor, mas ill n'es fera. (Poem VIII lines 17-18)  
('Il n'est aucun être que ne s'humilie envers Amour;  
elle, au contraire, est farouche envers lui')

(Les Poésies de Cercamon, ed. A. Jeanroy, Paris 1922.) This meaning of fer as 'proud, haughty' could be the particular sense employed in Marcabru's Poem XLIV, and s'umil would then indicate that the puta 'becomes humble, meek'. See also L. Spitzer, 'Le lion arbitre moral de l'homme', Romania, 64, 1938, 525-30 (526). It is possible that the word has a sexual connotation:

compare 'corpus, quod humiliatur in passionibus' (*Patrologiae cursus completus: Series latina*, J.P. Migne, Paris 1844-64, vol.1: col.524). In keeping with the medieval taste for etymologies, could *s'umil* here also be connected with the same sort of sexual activity which the Monk of Montaudon refers to in his *tenso* with God? Of women, God says:

e no.us pessetz ges que lur tir  
quant hom las fai corbas estar?

('et ne croyez-vous par que cela leur fasse mal quand  
les hommes les obligent à se tenir courbées?')

(*Les Poésies du Moine de Montaudon*, ed. M.J. Routledge, Montpellier 1977, Poem XIV lines 59-60). A similar allusion occurs in Marcabru's Poem XVIII ms C st.10, ms M st.7; 'plec l'esquina'. Lines 27-28 of Poem XLIV could then be interpreted as meaning: 'but then when she has had her will with them (her lovers), (contrarily and perversely) until she herself is bowed low/brought low/humbled, she does not value herself as highly as a glove'.

Line 28. *no.s prez'un gan*: see Raynouard IV, 640.

Lines 29-32. Compare Marcabru's 'A l'alena del vent doussa' line 11: 'de sai sen um pauc de feton', where a foul odour is associated with promiscuity, in a song which also refers in line 38 to a *puta* ('A l'alena del vent doussa de Marcabru: édition critique, traduction et commentaire', P.T. Ricketts, *Revue des Langues romanes*, 78, 1968, 109-115).

Line 33. *declinar*: 'd.h. als "Ausführungen, Erklärungen, Aufhellungen" (sc. über fals'amor usw.) geben'. (U. M81k, *Trobar clus: trobar leu*, Munich 1968, pp.73-4).

Lines 33-40. With reference to this stanza G. Errante (p.226) cites Prudentius's *Hamartigeneia*, the passage concerning the viper. It would appear more likely, however, that Marcabru is drawing on the traditional belief that a snake enchants or hypnotises its victims with its gaze (see Appel, p.458), since stanza 5 begins with the phrase 'l'us de putana serpenti', indicating the poet's intention of explaining the general ways of the snake rather than the 'serps detras' allusion.

Line 48. *fitz*: Lewent (p.449) saw *fitz* as a derivation of *ficar*, and Nelli appears to follow this explanation in his translation 'avant qu'elle

ne l'ait asservi' (R. Nelli, Écrivains anticonformistes du moyen-âge occitan, Paris 1977, II, 51).

- Line 52. Compare lines 41-44 and 65-67, also Poems V lines 1-12; VII lines 25-40; XVIII mss ADIK st.9, ms a st.15; XVIII ms C sts. 19 and 20; XXXI lines 33-36; XXXIII lines 43-48; XXXVII lines 17-18.

Lewent (p.448) considered the rhyme scheme and concluded that three stanzas are missing, not merely one as Dejeanne suggested (p.211).

- Line 57. Lewent thought that s'enpen was connected with se penar, 'to take trouble to' (p.448 note 1). Perhaps it may be related also to s'empenher/s'empendre, 'to advance', giving an interpretation 'to venture there'? (see SWB, II; 387).

- Lines 59-60. Dejeanne suggested that Roal and Bazen were the names of people (p.238). This would accord with the use Marcabru makes of exemplary figures (see Poems III, VI, XIX, XXXI, XXXII). Forms of the word bazen occur elsewhere in his songs. In poem VII the poet says:

Drutz qui.s fai semblar Baza  
Per Amor, que fols i fa. (lines 53-4)

('A lover who tries to be like Bazan for the sake of love really behaves like a fool'.)

Topsfield suggested that this is an allusion to the worthy Frankish knight of the Chanson de Roland, Basan, killed whilst on an embassy to the Saracens (see Topsfield, p.71, and F. Pirot, Recherches sur les connaissances littéraires des troubadours occitans et catalans des XII<sup>e</sup> et XIII<sup>e</sup> siècles, Barcelona 1975, pp.375-6 on Marcabru's use of an epic figure in Poem III). These instances can be compared to line 72 of Marcabru's song 'Doas cuidas':

e Jois es entre.ls francs faillitz,  
tornatz de basan en bertau. (lines 71-2)

Professor Ricketts reviews the interpretations of the words basan and bertau suggested by previous scholars and concludes:

il suffit de noter qu'il s'agit ici d'un grand déclin.  
Si bertau signifie 'imbécile', il s'ensuit que basan  
est le contraire,

and he understands lines 71-72 to mean that 'Jois, le paragon d'amour, est devenue une idiote' (p.194). (See also O. Schultz-

Gora, 'Zum Übergange von Eigennamen in Appellativa', *Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie*, 18, 1894, 130-137.)

Concerning the lines of Poem XLIV, Lewent equated moren with black (p.448, note 1), and R. Nelli speculated of stanza 7 that

le sens général doit être 'Quand la pute change en noir  
ce qui était blanc, et en fou celui qui était sage, elle  
ne rendra pas à l'un sa blancheur, ni à l'autre sa  
sagesse' (p.53).

This would seem to be the most plausible guess to date although, in the light of previous studies of basan (if bazen is the same thing), it might be best to modify R. Nelli's interpretation slightly, taking into account the fact that Marcabru clearly equates the colour white with fin'amors and represents evil promiscuity by blackness (see Poem XXIV lines 4-6 and 19-21):

When the whore changes to black that which was white  
(when she has debased fin'amors), and to an uncourtly  
fool he who was a model of cortesia, she will not give  
back to the first its whiteness, nor to the other his  
cortesia (refinement?).

(Roal would then seem to represent the same quality or characteristic as bertau in 'Doas cuidas'.)

It is also interesting in this context to consider Ecclesiasticus 25.17:

nequitia mulieris inmutat faciem eius  
et obcaecat vultum suum tamquam ursus.

('The wickedness of a woman maketh black her look, and  
darkeneth her countenance like that of a bear.')

The editors note that 'wickedness makes a woman sinister of aspect and fierce' (see *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, ed. R.H. Charles et al., Oxford 1913, p.276). The preceding verse 16 of Ecclesiasticus 25 reads:

commorari leoni et draconi placebit  
quam habitare cum muliere nequa.

('I would rather dwell with a lion and a dragon, than keep  
house with a wicked woman.')

containing elements which are reminiscent of Marcabru's chimera and evil puta. (Cf. also the reference to the snake in verse 15.) Verses 19 and 21 curse 'malitiam mulieris' ('the malice of a woman') and warn:

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ne respicias in mulieris speciem

('Fall not because of the beauty of a woman. '),

to which may be compared lines 47-48 and 57 of Poem XLIV. Perhaps one should also bear in mind the possibility that the 'I' of XLIV line 59 may be a reference to the puta's appearance or attitude in matters of love. These similarities, and that between Ecclesiasticus 26.12 and Poem XLIV lines 65-7 (see below, p.54), may indicate that Ecclesiasticus might have had an influence upon Marcabru's similarly misogynist poem. The traces of this biblical book appear especially in stanzas 5 onwards, that is to say, in those stanzas which are transmitted by mss E and N only: can anything useful be inferred from this regarding the scribes of these mss?

- Lines 61-64. These lines do not form a grammatical whole since ms E, in which they appear, does not contain what would be line 62. In the translation I have suggested what may have been the overall sense of these lines. One could, perhaps, suppose a past participle in the rhyme position of line 62 (compare lines 38, 46, 54).
- Line 64. Puditz may be an example of the rhetorical figure 'metaplasm', 'a deviation from the grammatical norm which is permitted to poets in consideration of the demands of the metre' (E.R. Curtius, European literature and the Latin middle ages, translated by W.R. Trask, London 1953, p.44). Puditz could perhaps be understood as a participle, adjectivally used, describing cap, 'head' (?): although one would expect puans or pudens (from pudir), these would not fit the rhyme scheme. Compare Alanus de Insulis on the chimera as a symbol of lust: 'in medio capram foetosae libidinis' (PL 210: 122). Could cap in Marcabru's song be connected with cabre/capre, perhaps the result of some scribal error?
- Lines 65-67. Punctuation from Lewent, p.449.

Correct interpretation of the song depends to a certain extent upon identifying the audience for whom it was intended. Marcabru addresses his purported audience directly in the very first line as soudadier. Appel suggested that in the light of the fact that both Marcabru and Giraut de Bornelh refer to themselves as soudadier the term should be understood in a wide sense, and that the 'mercenaries', those who are in the solda or 'pay' of someone,

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werden alle die sein, welche von einem hohen Herrn  
abhängen und keinen eigenen festen Besitz haben, von dem  
sie leben können. <sup>13</sup>

Such a group would include 'les jeunes chevaliers et soldats', as Professor Ricketts interprets the term in 'Doas cuidas', the troubadours, and those men

... per cui es Jovens  
Mantengutz e Jois eisamens (XLIV 1-2),

who have an appreciation of and are concerned with the ways of cortesía, and who would understand the allusions contained in the poem.

The song warns these people against the puta in terms very similar to those which Marcabru uses in Poem XVIII of fals'amors (line 38). In both these songs the poet describes the corruption, treachery and destructive effects of false love and of the puta in emotive language, with the aid of images drawn from classical literature and the Scriptures.

The puta, like fals'amors, is treacherous:

En puta qui s'i fia  
Es hom traïtz (XLIV 5-6),

and

Amors soli'esser drecha,  
Mas er'es torta e brescha. (XVIII 25-6)<sup>14</sup>

('Love used to be straight but now it's twisted and broken.')

Marcabru draws on the misogynist commonplace of women's deceit, as he does in several other songs, and, fusing the notions of Amors and Woman, applies the commonplace in exactly the same way to the personification of love in Poem XVIII and to the whore in Poem XLIV. These two songs illustrate the confusion which Jeanroy described when he remarked of love in troubadour poetry:

Aussi est-il capricieux et fantasque, comme la dame  
elle-même, dont il se distingue au reste si peu que parfois  
on ne sait duquel des deux il s'agit. <sup>15</sup>

This use of the idea of treachery here serves already as an indication that the puta may not be a real prostitute, who would have no call to deceive.

Love / the whore deceives by means of her hypocritical semblan: at first she presents a pleasing, attractive appearance, but later her real corruption is revealed and she is seen to be predatory and motivated solely by self-interest. At first she is as sweet as spiced wine, but in the end she is more cozens, bitter and cruel than a serpent's bite (XLIV 9-12).<sup>16</sup> Both the puta and fals'amors seek only their own profit in their liaisons: they change their behaviour according to where their own advantage lies, exploiting their partners, or those who become involved with them:

Greu sera mais Amors vera  
Pos del mel triet la cera  
Anz sap si pelar la pera. (XVIII 31-33)

('Henceforth it will be difficult for love to be true, since she separated the honey from the wax: rather she knows how to peel the pear for herself.')

and the whore gives her services only when she is sure of great rewards (XLIV stanza 9). They are rapacious, taking everything they can from their victims. Fals'amors

De totz cessals a ces prisa,  
Escoutatz!  
Chascus en pren sa devisa,  
Ja pois no.n sera cuitatz. (XVIII 9-12).<sup>17</sup>

('She has levied a tax on all her people - Listen - each one owes his due and no one will ever be quit of it.')

False love takes the good things (XVIII stanza 6) just as, in Poem XLIV,

Fai del ric putana frairi;  
Quan n'a trag la bresch'e.l saï,  
Li fai de la lengua bossi. (42-44)

The whore takes everything, reducing the man to a pauper, and then sticks her tongue out at him in derision.

Of false love Marcabru says

Fams ni mortaldatz ni guerra  
No fai tan de mal en terra  
Quon amors qu'ab enguan serra<sup>18</sup>



('Neither famines nor epidemics nor wars do so much evil in this world as love, who imprisons men treacherously'),

and in Poem XLIV the association of the puta with the crossbow in stanza 9 reinforces the impression that the puta is a dangerous creature. Weaponry in general and bows in particular are found in a variety of sources as sexual images. Godefroy lists an example from an Old French poem where, 'en langage libre', li gieus d'arbalestiaus, 'the game of little crossbows', is figuratively used to represent the game of love.<sup>19</sup> An Arab chronicler of the Third Crusade describes the behaviour of Frankish women, probably prostitutes, in similar terms, saying

They made themselves targets for men's darts ... offered themselves to the lance's blows ... they invited swords to enter their sheaths ... [and] fitted arrows to the bow's handle.<sup>20</sup>

A similar image is to be found in at least one passage in the Bible, in the Book of Ecclesiasticus which Marcabru seems to draw on several times for this poem. The passage is concerned with whoredom, and warns against the shameless behaviour of women:

sicut viator sitiens ad fontem os aperiet  
et ab omni aqua proxima bibet  
et contra omnem palum sedebit et contra omnem sagittam  
aperiet faretram donec deficiat. (Ecclesiasticus 26.12)

('As a thirsty traveller that openeth his mouth, and drinketh of any water that is near,  
so she sitteth down at every post, and openeth her quiver to every arrow.')

The passage of Marcabru's poem runs:

Put a per usatge .s defen  
Al ric, si gran loguier no.n pren  
Lai on l'arbalesta desten. (65-67)

This additionally recalls a passage from Huon de Méry Li tournoïement Antecrit:

Venus, qui virges et pucelles  
Asaut, tendi sans atendue  
L'arc amoureu, s'a destendu (lines 2568-70)<sup>21</sup>

('Venus, who assails virgins and young girls, without waiting drew the bow of love and fired it.')

Whereas the female figure of Venus is described as drawing and firing the bow of love, in Marcabru's poem it is a question of the evil *puta* malevolently firing her deadly crossbow.<sup>22</sup> Marcabru, like Huon de Méry, appears to be parodying the traditional symbol of Venus, or perhaps he is drawing on the classical and medieval symbols of the two contrasting Venuses which are found in the works of Ovid, John Scotus and Bernardus Silvestris, among others. The troubadour would here be employing the evil, negative figure in Poem XLIV. George Economou has analysed the instances and significance of the two Venuses in medieval literature and shown that the evil Venus – whom Bernardus Silvestris describes as '*carnis concupiscentiam, quia omnium fornicationum mater est*' – illustrates not only lustful, impure love, but also the sinful, selfish, unthinking immoral attitude which is both a feature and a result of the practice of this type of love.<sup>23</sup>

The conduct and vices ascribed to the *puta* in Poem XLIV are found in many of Marcabru's other poems, where they are attributed to false love. In Poem XLIV the harlot's treachery is further emphasised in lines 68-72:

On sap lo pa e vi aten  
Molt fai gran glotonia  
La trichairitz,  
Quan los pros lais'e tria  
Los achaïtz.

In Poem XXXI a similar connection is made between greed and sexual misconduct:

Amars creis et atahina  
Tric'ab coratje gloto (19-20)<sup>24</sup>

('Love grows, and torments, and tricks with a greedy heart.')

and in Marcabru's *tenso* with Ugo Catola, fals'amistatz is described as leaving the courtly *pros*, worthy men, for inferior wretches, *achaïtz*:

Catola, Ovides mostra chai,  
e l'ambladura o retraï,  
que non soana brun ni bai,  
anz se traï plus aus achaïtz. (37-40)<sup>25</sup>

('Catola, Ovid shows us here and amply demonstrates that Love does not reject blondes or brunettes but rather is drawn more to worthless wretches.')

The whore of Poem XLIV is equally lacking in discrimination: she has no regard for inner worth and is motivated by self-interest only. The theme of false love rejecting men for financial gain (XLIV stanzas 7 and 9) is found in several poems by Marcabru and is linked with false love's treachery and faithlessness.<sup>26</sup> In one of these diatribes against false love Marcabru says that even if a man had the inner worth (valors) of a nobleman, love would reject him if he had not the money to back up his courting:

Si valiatz un marques  
Ja no.us en fasatz cortes,  
Pos d'aver non auretz ges (VII 34-6).

Courtly considerations and qualities would be of no help to him, for this love's esteem depends on wealth:

Ja no.us hi valra merces  
Pos vos er faillitz l'avens (VII 39-40)

('Merce will be worth nothing to you once you have run out of money.')

Similarly, in Poem XLIV, Marcabru appears to be playing on the ambiguity of terms denoting wealth, value and worth in order to expose love's mercenary, venal nature.

It would seem to be a commonplace to label a woman of suspect morals a prostitute, but that both promiscuity and venality are connected in the behaviour of a true prostitute is evidence of Marcabru's play on words and ideas. Women who accept gifts and who entertain as lovers only the most prodigal of men seem to be acting with the same lack of principles as a prostitute, and this renders his use of the word puta to indicate his disapproval of their behaviour all the richer in associative values: to the meaning of 'uncourtly lady' are added misogynist connotations of venality.

The inconstancy and hypocrisy of the puta, who changes her appearance and attitudes, are represented by the image of the Chimera:

De [G]uimerra porta semblan  
Qu'es serps detras, leos denan,  
Bocs en miei loc (17-19).

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In his Dictionary of Symbols, Cirlot described the monster and noted that 'like other teratological beings, the chimera is a symbol of complex evil'.<sup>27</sup> These negative connotations of the beast were used in literature with reference to women:

The more imaginative misogynists saw women as tri-form  
beasts, ... part lion (= man-hunter), part flame (= desire)  
and part devouring dragon.<sup>28</sup>

Here, as in the examples below, is found a certain confusion regarding exactly which parts of which creatures constituted a chimera.

This misogynist application had been a tradition since classical antiquity when the Greek comedian Anaxilas said that 'the whore is worse than Chimera and other beasts', and the image was retained by Plautus in his representation of courtesans.<sup>29</sup> Drawing perhaps on Lucretius' De rerum natura (Book V, lines 900-905), Horace uses the image of the chimera in one of his odes: talking to a love-sick youth, upon discovering the boy's problem, he exclaims:

quae saga, quis te solvere Thessalis  
magus venenis, quis poterit deus?  
vix illigatum te triformi  
Pegasus expediet Chimaera.<sup>30</sup>

('What wise woman, what magus with Thessalian potions, or  
which god can release you? Pegasus can hardly free you  
from the triform chimera.')

This traditional association of the image with women was continued by, among others, Walter Map in the letter Valerius Rufino de ducat uxorem which appears in Map's De nugis curialium.<sup>31</sup> According to the Revised Medieval Latin Word-List, the term chimaera was used in thirteenth-century England in the sense of 'harlot', an indication, perhaps, that the identification of immoral, wicked women with the classical monster had become a commonplace by then.<sup>32</sup>

Following the allusion to and description of the chimera in stanza 3 of Poem XLIV, Marcabru says

Qui despeis la bestia  
Non es faillitz  
D'aquo que entendia  
De la trairitz.

(21-24)

He speaks of 'he who described the beast', thus apparently referring to Ovid and his *Metamorphoses*.<sup>33</sup> Marcabru was familiar, or at least acquainted with Ovid's writings: he cites him as an authority in his *tenso* with Ugo Catola and is probably referring there to *Amores* II. 4: 34-44.<sup>34</sup>

But it is more likely that, in this section of Poem XLIV, Marcabru is referring to Marbod as his source. Marbod (1035-1123), bishop of Rennes, was noted for his Latin verse and, among other works, composed a ten-chapter poem in Latin. The second chapter is entitled *De Meretrice* and, following an enumeration of all the terrible evils and sins for which women are responsible, it contains these lines:

Hujus in exemplum monstri gravis atque cavendi,  
Finxit terribilem sapientia prisca chimaeram;  
Cui non immerito fertur data forma triformis;  
Nam pars prima leo, pars ultima cauda draconis,  
Et mediae partes nil sunt nisi fervidus ignis.  
Haec ad naturam meretricis ludit imago,  
Ut praedam rapiat quae praefert ora leonis,  
Egregio simulans quiddam quasi nubile vultu;  
Hac specie captos flammis exurit amoris,  
In quo nil solidi, nil ponderis esse videtur,  
Sed levis, et ratione carens, fervensque libido,  
Ultima sunt cujus lethali farta veneno,  
Quippe voluptates mors et damnatio finit.<sup>35</sup>

('As an example of this fearful and awesome monster (the *Meretrice*), ancient learning has designed the terrible *Chimaera*, to which it was said, not incorrectly, was given a three-fold form, for the fore part is a lion, the rear part the tail of a dragon, and the area between nothing but raging fire. This image suits the nature of a harlot, as she seizes the prey which passes before the lion's jaws, simulating something like a noble and nubile countenance; and by her false appearance, in which there is nothing of substance or weight, but only trivial, irrational and fervent lust, she burns up her captives by the flames of love; and her end parts are filled full of lethal poison. In fact, death and damnation are the end of sensual pleasures.')

Marbod presents the courtesan, through the image of the chimera, as the symbol of complex evil, the epitome of evil for mankind.

In Marbod's poem are found the same ideas that occur in Marcabru's song. The *puta* is like a lion, traditionally a proud and rapacious beast,

and is described as

Fers es d'ergueill al comensan,  
Mas pueis quan n'a fag son talan,  
Tro que son mil, no.s pretz'un gan. (26-8)

In this passage the notions of the puta's pride, insatiability and man as victim are brought together.<sup>36</sup>

In stanza 5 Marcabru explains the general ways of the snake, 'l'us de putana serpenti', echoing Marbod's dragon. As Madame Thiolier-Méjean has noted, 'depuis Eve, la femme et le serpent ont des affinités',<sup>37</sup> and Marcabru uses this association in his tenso to criticise false love and treacherous women:

mas de faus'amistat mi clam,  
q'anc pos lo serps baissa lo ram  
non foron tant enganairiz. (6-8)<sup>38</sup>

('but I am complaining about false love, for never since the serpent lowered the branch were there so many deceitful women'.)

Marbod's poem contains an allusion to Adam's betrayal of Eve, and the similarities between his De Meretrice and Marcabru's song are underlined by Marcabru's use of the word metritz in line 30, a term he eschews elsewhere in his songs, preferring the more colloquial puta. Marbod's poem contains exempla of biblical and historical characters, including Solomon whom Marcabru cites in stanza 2, brought low by women, and his chimera passage is followed by the injunction:

O genus hominum! mellita venena caveto,  
et dulces cantus tractumque voraginis acrae,  
nec te compositi seducat gratia vultus,  
flammas urentes, saevumque timeto draconem.<sup>39</sup>

('Oh, Mankind, beware the honeyed potions and sweet melodies and the lure of the fateful chasm. Let not the beauty of a false face seduce you. Fear the burning flames and the brutal dragon.')

This recalls the words of Marcabru in stanzas 2, 6, 7 and 9 of Poem XLIV and his warnings to the audience to beware of the false, attractive lies of the puta (lines 3-4 and 50-51).

Scheludko suggested that Marcabru was influenced in composing one stanza of another of his songs (Poem XXXVIII stanza 2) by a poem by Marbod, and this critic elsewhere pointed out the possible influence on the early troubadours of Marbod's writings concerning rhetorical technique.<sup>40</sup> These possible influences, together with the striking similarities of theme and image between Poem XLIV and De Meretrice, suggest that Marcabru was familiar with Marbod's works.

Alanus de Insulis later described lust as

a monster with the head of a virgin (for the image of desire), the body of a goat (for stinking appetite), and the back of a wolf (for the depredation of virtue).<sup>41</sup>

The general similarities of thought and expression in all three works are indicative of a certain current of ideas prevalent in the mid-twelfth century, at least in clerical circles, and the resemblances would seem to provide yet another intriguing indication that Marcabru himself received an education and had a clerical background. It seems likely that Marcabru took Marbod's poem as a basis for his own, but that he elaborated and developed the notion of the whore to suit his own needs. De Meretrice would then have been inspirational influence, but not a model to the extent of restricting Marcabru's own invention and adaptation: the differences between the two works are sufficient to suggest that the troubadour did not slavishly copy the bishop.

Like the meretrice, the puta of Poem XLIV and love of Marcabru's Poem XVIII are evil and destroy men. They trap men in their snares and bring them to ruin and death:

Amors es de mout mal avi;  
 Mil homes a mortz ses glavi,  
 Dieus non fetz tant fort gramavi;  
 Escoutatz!  
 Que tot nesci del plus savi  
 Non fassa, si. l ten al latz. (XVIII 43-8)<sup>42</sup>

('Love belongs to a very wicked race: she has killed a thousand men without a sword, God never made such a powerful magician - Listen! - who can turn the wisest man into a complete fool if she holds him in her nets.')

In Poem XLIV Marcabru advises his audience that

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Ben es de gran folia  
Sals e gueritz  
Qui.s destol de sa via  
Ans qu'ela.l fitz. (45-8)

He who associates with and trusts the puta then

Aten com per leis sia  
Mortz o delitz. (39-40)

Marcabru contrasts this foolish confidence (line 7) with the attitude of a wise man: 'Savis senatz lai no s'empen' (line 57). Such a person avoids the puta because of her negative effects:

Quan l'aura fag de blanc moren,  
No.l torn de roal en bazen. (59-60)

('when she has changed to black that which was white (when she has debased fin'amors), and changed to an unworthy fool he who was a paragon of cortesía, she will not restore to the first its whiteness, nor to the other his cortesía (refinement?))')

Other passages in Marcabru's poems make it clear that the troubadour represented fin'amors as white, and the most explicit contrast which he makes in these terms between false love and fin-amors is to be found in Poem XXIV:

Qui a drut reconogut d'una color  
Blanc lo teigna, puois lo deigna ses brunor;  
C'amors vair'al mieu veiair'a l'usatge trahidor. (4-6)<sup>43</sup>

('The person who has a recognised lover of one colour, let them keep it white, without blemish, for piebald love in my opinion has treacherous ways.')

Describing the amia's promiscuity in stanza 7 of Poem XXIV, the poet continues the analogy, saying:

Enaissi torn'a decli l'amors e torn'en negror. 21

('In this way love goes into a decline and becomes blackened.')

Sexual licence and fornication are the black enemies of fin'amors, the amia is responsible for blackening love, and the puta of Poem XLIV, who 'fag de



blanc moren', is the incarnation of these vices.

Madame Thiolier-Méjean, in a footnote, draws an interesting conclusion from the images of these songs: the chimera of Poem XLIV,

un animal sans unité, fait de parties disparates, et une  
couleur changeante, indéterminée [voir of Poem XXIV],  
deviennent l'illustration de la tromperie.<sup>44</sup>

This recalls the stanza of Poem XVIII where bad love is described as 'un  
'entrebescada cauza', 'a mixed-up, disorderly thing'.<sup>45</sup>

It is the lack of stability (white becomes black), the lack of inner integrity or wholeness, and the moral corruption of the puta and of Amars which lie at the root of Marcabru's complaints. For these reasons love represents a foolish burden for him:

Ben es cargatz de fol fais  
Qui d'Amor es en pantais. (VII 21-22)

('He is indeed loaded with a foolish burden, the man who is troubled by love.')

A clear-sighted person, one who has achieved bona cuida, should discern this, as the girl in Marcabru's famous pastourelle (Poem XXX) perceives the knight's lack of integrity, but a fool is deceived, easily persuaded of the apparent truth of what he sees and hears, and is destroyed. This antithesis of folly and wisdom underlies all Marcabru's works.

The sources on which Marcabru draws to illustrate this conflict are not only classical but also biblical, as is shown by his references to Solomon in Poems VI, XVIII, XXIX and here in Poem XLIV. It is possible that these references represent more than a glib attempt to add authority to his arguments, and that they indicate that his songs may possess a deeper significance or message additional to the superficial, surface meaning.

The reference to the chimera, in such detail and in such a context, would indicate that Marcabru had a knowledge perhaps of Ovid's monster and probably of Marbod's use of the image in his work. Marcabru appears to have received an education: Dr Paterson, for instance, gives examples of Marcabru's use of images and symbols drawn from the Latin and Christian moralising tradition, which suggest that he knew of the rhetorical and exegetical examples and was familiar with their application.<sup>46</sup>

The probable source of stanza 2 of Poem XLIV, where the troubadour refers to Solomon's words, is a passage in the Book of Proverbs which, like the other Wisdom books (The Wisdom of Solomon and Ecclesiasticus), was attributed in the middle ages to Solomon:<sup>47</sup>

fovea enim profunda est meretrix et puteus angustus  
aliena insidiatur in via quasi latro et quos incautos  
viderit interficiet ...

nonne his qui morantur in vino et student calicibus  
epotandis? ne intuearis vinum quando flavescit cum  
splenduerit in vitro color eius. ingreditur blande;  
sed in novissimo mordebit ut coluber et sicut regulus  
venena diffundet. (Proverbs 23.27-8 and 30-32).

('For a whore is a deep ditch and a strange woman is a narrow  
pit. She also lieth in wait as for prey and increaseth the  
transgressors among men ...  
Look thou not upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth  
his colour in the cup,  
when it moveth itself aright.  
And at the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an  
adder.')

Here also are found the notions of betrayal, the evil trickery of the prostitute, the analogy of the deceptive sweetness of wine which contrasts with its later sharpness, cruel as a snake's bite. The religious ring of line 14 of Marcabru's song, *la pecairitz*, reinforces this impression of a biblical basis for this stanza, and perhaps of a similar influence on the poem as a whole.

One of the most obvious influences, and one of the most often used in medieval literature, is the Great Whore of Babylon of the Book of Revelations,<sup>48</sup> but Marcabru also seems to draw heavily on the Book of Proverbs. In Poem XVIII, in the clerical tradition of misogyny, he warns against false love, which is represented as a female figure, saying

Qui per sen de femna reigna  
Dreitz es que mals li.n aveigna,  
Si cum la letra.ns enseigna;  
Escoutatz!  
Malaventura.us en veigna  
Si tuich no vos en gardatz! (61-66)

('As the Scripture tells us, it is right that evil befall the man who is governed by (rules by means of?) a woman's reason - Listen! - ill-fortune will come to you through it unless in everything you do not guard yourself against it.')

M. de Riquer remarks of line 63 that it is an

alusión general a los pasajes salomónicas de la Escritura contra las malas mujeres,<sup>49</sup>

and there are many striking similarities between Poem XVIII and the Book of Proverbs.<sup>50</sup> The above stanza, for example, can be compared to Proverbs 6.20-27, where a young man is advised to 'keep to the commandments of thy father and to the law of thy mother',<sup>51</sup> and to guard himself against 'the evil woman, from the flattery of the tongue of the strange woman'.<sup>52</sup> In other words, he should not allow himself to be ruled 'per sen de femna'.

As the Book of Proverbs carries warnings against the wiles exercised by wicked women and the destruction which they bring to men, so Marcabru's Poem XVIII describes the evil trickery of false love. G. Errante, who has researched possible biblical and liturgical sources of inspiration for Marcabru's poetry, makes surprisingly few allusions to the Book of Proverbs or Ecclesiastes in connection with this song. J.J. Wilhelm points to two passages from the Book of Proverbs - although there are more - and says that 'Solomon clearly aligns folly with the adulterous love of women', citing Proverbs 5.3-4 and 6.32 in support of this.<sup>53</sup>

The first of these two passages was later used by Innocent III to explain and define the effects of lust:

O extreme shame of lust, which not only makes the mind effeminate but weakens the body; not only stains the soul but fouls the person ... Always, hot desire and wantonness precede lust, stench and filth accompanying it, sorrow and repentance follow it. 'The lips of the strange woman drip as an honeycomb, and her mouth is smoother than oil; But her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword.'<sup>54</sup>

G. Economou remarks that this explanation is quite traditional, and the biblical passage would seem to be used frequently by medieval moralising writers with a misogynistic bent.<sup>55</sup>

The second passage cited by J.J. Wilhelm (Proverbs 6.32) refers to

adultery, but the first is concerned with a 'strange woman': this figure is and was traditionally glossed as 'prostitute, harlot'.<sup>56</sup> Folly is not only clearly aligned with adultery but, even more frequently in the Book of Proverbs, with harlots.

There was a strong tradition, both in Old Testament times and in medieval biblical exegesis, of representing heresy, apostasy and false beliefs by the figure of a whore. The Old Testament books, including those ascribed to Solomon, made use of this tradition and it would appear that there were sound historical reasons for this since holy prostitution featured prominently in the pagan religions which were attacked by Old Testament writers. False beliefs were depicted by images of whoredom:

et tulisti vasa decoris tui  
de auro meo et argento meo quae dedi tibi  
et fecisti tibi imagines masculinas et fornicata es in eis.  
(Ezekiel 16.17)<sup>57</sup>

('Thou has also taken thy fair jewels of my gold and of my silver, which I had given thee, and madest to thyself images of men, and didst commit whoredom with them.')

From early biblical times whores were closely associated with heresy, not only through images such as these but, a point which was taken up by the exegete, also in *exempla*.<sup>58</sup> Solomon and David were figures widely used by writers wishing to illustrate the pernicious influence of women who lure men away from the paths of righteousness.<sup>59</sup> Solomon, for example, was led into idolatry by his concubines:

numquid non in huiusmodi re peccavit Salomon rex Israel  
et certe in gentibus multis non erat rex similis ei et  
dilectus Deo suo erat,  
et posuit eum Deus regem super omnem Israel  
et ipsum ergo ad peccatum duxerunt mulieres alienigenae.  
(Nehemiah 13.26)

('Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things?  
Yet among many nations was there no king like him, who was beloved of his God, and God made him king over all Israel; nevertheless even him did outlandish women cause to sin.')

In medieval exegesis women continued to be very closely associated with heresy, responsible for it and symbolising it. Alanus de Insulis, in his *Liber in Distinctiones Dictionum Theologicalium* (thought to have been written

between 1175 and 1185), says that women typify heresy:

dicitur haeresis, unde mulier quae typum haereseos tenet,  
callidis persuasionibus blanditur, dicens in Salomone:  
'Aquaе furtivae dulciores sunt', id est sententiae  
haereticorum dulciores sunt simplicibus et idiotis  
dogmatibus Catholicorum, quia haeretici semper volunt  
esse in delectatione carnis, sed Ecclesiae doctrina jubet  
abstinere a carnalibus desideriis.<sup>60</sup>

('It is called heresy from Woman who possesses the figure of  
heresy and who entices with crafty persuasions, as it is  
said in Solomon, 'Stolen waters are sweet', that is, the  
words of the heretic are sweeter to the simple and uneducated  
than the dogma of the Catholics, because the heretics  
always want to delight in the flesh, but the teachings of  
the Church order one to abstain from carnal desires.')

Alanus is here commenting on the Book of Proverbs (9.17), on the beguiling  
words of a bad woman seducing men away from wisdom and righteousness.<sup>61</sup>  
Of the mechanics of this close association in medieval exegesis J.M. Ferrante  
has said that

[man's] seduction may be either physical or intellectual.  
Whores are connected with heresy as well as with carnal lust:  
indeed, fornication and heresy (the allurement of superficial  
beauty, whether of body or word) are almost synonymous in  
much exegesis. The whore seduces with sweet words and the  
beauty of her body as the heretic seduces with attractive  
doctrines.<sup>62</sup>

Such was the intellectual and exegetical background against which Marcabru  
was composing his songs. His use of biblical sources and of Marbod's work  
argues a certain familiarity with religious writings and it is probable that,  
having this knowledge, he was also aware of its intellectual foundations.  
Marcabru seems to have drawn on the Book of Proverbs and Ecclesiasticus for  
his Poem XVIII, and similar parallels can be made between these biblical  
texts and passages in Poem XLIV.<sup>63</sup>

The similarities of ideas and language between Poems XVIII and  
XLIV point to the conclusion that the figures of false love and the whore are  
representations of exactly the same concept, that of evil licentiousness, an  
aspect of *Malvestatz*. Both striking figures are presented with the aid of  
images whose origins can be traced to, *inter alia*, the Book of Proverbs, and

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in both poems Marcabru draws attention to his biblical sources (XVIII 63 and XLIV 9). Both poems contain savage attacks on a female figure and both make much of the notions of deceit and sweet lies:

Putan'es de tan mal engenh  
C'ab dous parlar cueill et asenh  
Totz cels que pot metr'en congrenh. (XLIV 49-51)

In Poem XVIII Amors

Sos digz aplan'et entosca,  
Escoutatz!  
Plus suau poing qu'una mosca  
Mas plus greu n'es hom sanatz. (57-60)

('She smoothes and polishes her words - Listen! - she stings more gently than a fly but it is more difficult for a man to be cured of it.')

Dr Paterson points out that Marcabru is here drawing on the Latin moralising tradition which likens sin to insect bites:

as flies sting imperceptibly but poison the whole body, so sin steals unnoticed into the soul and corrupts it.<sup>64</sup>

The beginnings of false love and its lies are similarly insidious.

The whore and false love seduce with their lies as the 'strange woman' of the Book of Proverbs entices men away from the true ways of believing and behaving:

et ecce mulier occurrit illi ornatu meretricio praeparata  
ad capiendas animas ...  
inretivit eum multis sermonibus et blanditiis labiorum  
protraxit illum. (Proverbs 7.10 and 21)<sup>65</sup>

('And behold, there met him a woman with the attire of an harlot, and subtil of heart ...  
With her much fair speech she caused him to yield, with the flattering of her lips she forced him.')

It is possible that Marcabru was not only influenced by the vivid biblical images, which accorded well with his apparent misogyny, but chose to include the figure of the puta also because of its deeper connotations of false beliefs.

It was conceded and perhaps even expected that poetry could contain a message deeper than the surface meaning. Alanus de Insulis, for example, in the *De Placitu Naturae*, speaks of the 'superficial, literal bark of the poem' and of the 'sweeter nucleus of truth secreted inside it' which is there to be interpreted by the listeners.<sup>66</sup> Marcabru appears to have composed his songs in just this way, with regard both to the principles of symbolism as revealed in biblical exegesis and to the kinds of images and their explanations which were found in this moralising tradition. Following the patterns of biblical exegesis and influenced by the principles of rhetoric, Marcabru developed and embroidered on such traditions in his own lyric creations. As M. Lazar has suggested:

s'il n'y a pas eu d'influence du mysticisme chrétien sur  
la formation de l'idéologie amoureuse courtoise ...  
peut-être a-t-il eu une influence du vocabulaire mystique  
sur le langage des troubadours, un décalque de la  
rhétorique ecclésiastique? <sup>67</sup>

Without adopting the totality of these mystical ideas, troubadours such as Marcabru may well have been influenced stylistically by such writings, and it is possible to consider the use of the figure of the whore as one aspect of secular, troubadour use of ecclesiastical rhetoric.

Marcabru elsewhere borrows images and uses language which have religious associations. In Poem XL he says

Et aissellas putas ardens  
Qu'i son d'autrui maritz cossens;  
Cist auran guazalh infernau (19-21)

('And those ardent whores who consent to the husbands of  
others - these will have the prize of hell.') <sup>68</sup>

'Burning whores' are here connected with other women's husbands: promiscuous sexual relations - indeed, amorous relations of any kind - with such men were prohibited in Marcabru's courtly canon,<sup>69</sup> and the 'terme particulièrement blessant' of *puta* is applied, as in Poem XXXIV, to women who fail to live up to the standards of *fin'amors*.<sup>70</sup> With reference to this song, Poem XL, Topsfield observed that

In attempting to define the qualities of *fin'amors*, ...  
Marcabru contrasts two ways of life and thought. <sup>71</sup>

This technique mirrors, in a less explicit way, that of the song 'Doas cuidas'.

Among those consigned to hell are those who act against fin'amors, those with wrong thoughts or beliefs concerning love, and many whose crimes are connected with wrong beliefs. The word fals is stressed throughout: a false philosophy of life or set of beliefs and values is the common trait of the different types, including the putas, who feature on the list of criminals in Poem XL.

The terms in which these women and other wrong-doers are condemned are Christian in colouring. This does not mean that Marcabru is setting himself up as an apologist for an exclusively orthodox Christian morality, but rather that he is saying that

the virtues required by fin'amors exclude uncontrolled behaviour which is dominated by deceitful self-interest and carnal desire, and which is as offensive to the Christian ethic as it is to the concept of mesura and the 'natural' order of life in society.<sup>72</sup>

The troubadour has borrowed well-known and emotionally charged images of damnation and punishment from the Christian tradition in order powerfully to illustrate his condemnation of those whose behaviour offends the secular ethic of pure fin'amors. The religious elements are used in a figurative way, to colour the style, and not in their original literal sense.

The implication of the figure of the puta in Poem XLIV is not that Marcabru is employing the symbolism of heresy as a means of condemning secular fin'amors as a deviation from Christian caritas.<sup>73</sup> If a 'heretical' set of false beliefs is here in question, it is unlikely to be fin'amors itself that the troubadour is criticising, but rather those forms of behaviour and those attitudes which are a departure from and a corruption of the pure, ennobling fin'amors which he praises in his poems.<sup>74</sup>

The promiscuous puta is the enemy of fin'amors, fin'amors being one of the guiding principles of life which, when followed truly, can confer the greatest spiritual, emotional and social benefits on man.<sup>75</sup> But, in order truly to follow fin'amors and obtain these benefits, a man must be clear-sighted, aware and disciplined, and must first develop cuida entiers. Only one way of thinking, one philosophy of life can bring good results, enable man to see beyond superficialities and behave in accordance with truth and goodness. What betrays man is the folia cuida, which brings chaos, social and moral disorder and spiritual death. He is misled by his false beliefs and following folia cuida interprets wrongly what he sees:

la folia cuida mène à la décéption chez les soudadier, à l'amour inconstant chez les amoureux, à une perte des valeurs courtoises qui se communique aux maris.<sup>76</sup>



Here again appears the idea of superficial, deceptive semblan, in association with folly (or wrong thought), and contrasted with reason (or the right way of thinking). This antithesis is reflected in Poem XVIII, and it is also present in Poem XLIV. In the allusion to sen de femna (XVIII 63) Marcabru seems to understand folly and wrong thinking, which is made clear by the presentation of 'women's reason' in the Proverbial source of his images, where folly includes the connotation of false beliefs.<sup>77</sup> In Poem XLIV, lines 7-8 show that wrong belief betrays a man:

Lo fols, quan cuid.il ria,  
Es escarnitz.

('The fool, when he believes she is smiling at him, in fact is mocked.')

In 'Doas cuidas' the soudadier are described as misled and deluded, and in Poem XLIV Marcabru again shows his concern for this group of men and their inner welfare by warning them against the misleading, evil puta. The dangerous folly of believing such a woman is stressed in lines 45-48 :

Ben es de gran folia  
Sals e gueritz  
Qui.s destol de sa via  
Ans qu'ela.l fitz.

Folia, with its connotations of sexual promiscuity,<sup>78</sup> can be equated with folia cuida, incarnated in Poem XLIV by the harlot. The puta represents Malvestatz as this manifests itself in matters of love, and on the broader philosophical level, the wanton figure of the harlot also carries connotations of the false beliefs of Malvestatz, and represents a certain deviation from fin'amors and cuidas entiers. This interpretation would be one of the 'colours' of the word puta, and is far from constituting the whole interpretation or accounting for all the nuances of the term.

As Guiette indicated, the preponderance of symbols, signs and images - such as those of the classical chimera and the Proverbial puta - in medieval literature would imply that the authors were addressing a public sensitive to such nuances and aware of the deeper implications of the images.<sup>79</sup> That each sign was not restricted in the number of meanings it carried has been explained by Guiette, M.R. Jung, M.W. Bloomfield and other scholars.<sup>80</sup> Guiette showed that

le symbolisme n'est pas nécessairement précis et unique. Il peut changer de sens librement, superposer divers sens.

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M.R. Jung has remarked that both profane and Christian exegetical traditions

admettent une pluralité de significations, où une explication n'en exclut pas les autres,

and Topsfield spoke of the troubadour technique of interweaving in their works extra levels of meaning.<sup>81</sup>

In Poem XLIV Marcabru appears to be playing deliberately on several connotations of the term puta. He uses it to designate the dompna who behaves with unacceptable, uncourtly promiscuity. He employs it of self-interested, venal women who, he says, give their favours in return for financial rewards, although this is perhaps a misogynistic commonplace, and in his song 'Soudadier, per cui es Jovens', Marcabru appears to draw on exegetical traditions - including the way in which the fearsome chimera seems to have been associated in misogynist writings with whores - using the puta to represent the false beliefs and folia cuida which the troubadour associates with Malvestatz and abuse of fin'amors. Poem XLIV with its harlot can be interpreted as an exposition of one way of life, love and thought, the wrong way, which is to be avoided; the other, true, courtly way is present in this song only implicitly.

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NOTES

1. W.D. Paden Jnr., 'Utrum Copularentur: of cors', L'Esprit Créateur, 19, 1979, 70-83 (73).
2. Poem XLIV of Poésies complètes du troubadour Marcabru, ed. J.M.L. Dejeanne, Toulouse 1909 (Bibliothèque Méridionale, 1st series, XXVII). A suggested new reading of and notes to 'Soudadier, per cui es Jovens' appears on pp.41-51 of this article and subsequent references to 'Poem XLIV' are to this version. Numbering of poems is taken from Dejeanne's edition.
3. P.T. Ricketts, 'Doas cuidas ai, compaigner de Marcabru: édition critique, traduction et commentaire', in Mélanges de philologie romane offerts à Charles Camproux, 2 vols., Montpellier 1978, I, 179-194 (179-80). See also L.T. Topsfield, Troubadours and Love, Cambridge 1975, pp.97ff.
4. D. Scheludko, 'Beitrdge zur Entstehungsgeschichte der altprovenzalischen Lyrik', Archivum Romanicum, 15, 1931, 137-206 (181).
5. See Poems XXXVI lines 19-30; XXXVIII; XII<sup>bis</sup> lines 26-35; XVIII ms C stanza 10, ms M stanza 7 (Dejeanne, p.84).
6. See Poems XII<sup>bis</sup>, XXIX, XXXI, XXXVI and XXXVIII, and R. Harvey, 'The satirical use of the courtly expression si dons in the works of the troubadour Marcabru', Modern Language Review, 78, 1983, 24-33, on bastard offspring.
7. P. Falk, 'Le cœuvre-chef comme symbole du mari trompé', Studia Neuphilologica, 33, 1961, 39-68 (55).
8. Compare Poem XII<sup>bis</sup> lines 28-30.
9. 'Lo Breviari d'Amor' de Matfre Ermengaut, ed. G. Azaïs, Paris 1862, lines 31007-08. Compare also Les Poésies de Bernart Marti, ed. E. Hoepffner, Paris 1929, Poem III lines 16-18.
10. K. Blumstein, Misogyny and idealisation in the courtly romance, Bonn 1977, p.10.
11. Compare A. Roncaglia, 'Cortesamen vuoiil comensar', Revista di Cultura Classica e Medioevale, 7, 1965, 948-961.

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12. See K. Lewent, 'Beiträge zum Verstandnis der Lieder Marcabrus', Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie, 37, 1913, 313-37 and 427-51 (448); G. Errante, Marcabru e le fonti sacre dell'antica lirica romana, Florence 1948, pp.224-25; C. Appel, 'Zu Marcabru', Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie, 43, 1923, 403-69 (422).
13. Appel, p.428. See also E. Köhler, 'Sens et fonction du terme "Jeunesse" dans la poésie des troubadours', in Mélanges offerts à René Crozet, 2 vols., Poitiers 1966, I, 569-83.
14. Compare Poem VII lines 9-10.
15. A. Jeanroy, La Poésie lyrique des troubadours, 2 vols., Paris 1934, II, 117-8.
16. Compare Poem XXI lines 31-36.
17. Compare Poem XVIII ms a stanza 15 (Dejeanne, p.83).
18. Poem XVIII ms C stanza 3, ms M stanza 3, ms a stanza 8 (Dejeanne, p.84).
19. F. Godefroy, Dictionnaire de l'ancienne langue française et de tous ses dialectes du IX<sup>e</sup> au XV<sup>e</sup> siècles, Paris 1880-1902, I, 377 a.
20. Arab historians of the Crusades, ed. F. Gabrieli, translated by E.J. Costello, London 1969, pp.205-06.
21. Huon de Méry 'Li tournoient Antecrit', ed. G. Wimmer, Ausgaben und Abhandlungen aus dem Gebiete der romanische Philologie, 76, Marburg 1888; see Godefroy, IX, 361.
22. The use against Christians of the crossbow, described as 'illam mortiferam et Deo odibilem ballistariorum', was forbidden by the Second Lateran Council in 1139 (quoted in P. Fournier, 'La Prohibition par le 2<sup>e</sup> concile de Latran d'armes jugées trop meurtrières', Revue générale de droit international public, 23, 1916, 471-79).
23. G. Economou, 'The two Venuses and courtly love', in Pursuit of Perfection: courtly love in medieval literature, ed. J.M. Ferrante and G. Economou, London 1975, pp.17-51 (p.22).

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24. See Lewent, p.434.
25. A. Roncaglia, 'La tenzone tra Ugo Catola e Marcabruno', in Linguistica e Filologia: omaggio a Benvenuto Terracini, Milan 1968, pp.203-54.
26. See Poems VII, V, XXXVII, XVIII ms C stanza 20, and Bernard de Ventadour: chansons d'amour, ed. M. Lazar, Paris 1966, Poem II.
27. J.E. Cirlot, Dictionary of symbols, translated by J. Sage, New York 1962, p.44.
28. Blumstein, p.23.
29. Quoted in K.L.M. Rogers, The Troublesome helpmate: a study of misogyny in literature, Seattle 1966, p.45. On the possible influence of Plautus and his place in medieval education, see Scheludko.
30. The Odes of Horace, ed. J. Michie, London 1967, pp.68-71 (Odes I, 27).
31. Walter Map's 'De nugis curialium', translated by M.R. James, Cymmrodorion Record Series 9, London 1923, p.161. Once falsely attributed to Saint Jerome, this letter is also found in PL 30: 255. I am grateful to Dr C. Luttrell of the University of Leicester for locating this reference.
32. The Revised Medieval Latin Word-List, R.E. Latham, London 1965, p.84.
33. Ovid: Metamorphoses, translated by F.J. Miller, 2 vols., London 1916, II, 48-49.
34. See J.J. Wilhelm, Seven troubadours: the creators of modern verse, London 1970, p.77.
35. PL 171:1698-99. See also A. Wulff, Die frauenfeindlichen Dichtungen in der romanischen Literatur des Mittelalters bis zum Ende des XIII. Jahrhunderts, Romanische Arbeiten 4, Halle 1914, p.21.
36. Compare Poem XVIII ms C stanza 14, ms M stanza 11, ms a stanza 5 (Dejeanne, p.85).

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37. S. Thiolier-Méjean, Les Poésies satiriques et morales des troubadours, Paris 1978, p.535.
38. Walter Map's letter also contains biblical exempla of Eve, Solomon and others.
39. See also H.R. Hays, The Dangerous Sex, London 1966.
40. D. Scheludko, 'Zur Geschichte des Natureingangs bei den Trobadors', Zeitschrift für französische Sprache und Literatur, 60, 1935-37, 257-334 (282). See also Paterson, pp.36-8. On Marbod's influence on rhetoric, see Scheludko, Entstehungsgeschichte, especially p.140 on the exposition of these ideas in the Liber decem capitulorum.
41. J.M. Ferrante, Woman's Image in Medieval Literature, London 1975, pp.7-8; Alanus de Insulis, Summa de Arte Praedicatoria, Chapter V, 'Contra luxuriam', PL, 210:121-22.
42. Compare Poem XVIII lines 13-18 and XVIII ms C stanza 3, ms M stanza 3, ms a stanza 8 (Dejeanne, p.84).
43. See Lewent, p.429. Compare Poems XXXII lines 64-7 and XXXVII lines 27-30.
44. Thiolier-Méjean, p.535.
45. ms C stanza 14, ms M stanza 11, ms a stanza 5 (Dejeanne, p.85).
46. See Paterson, pp.38-40 and A.H. Schutz, 'Marcabru and Jehosaphat', Romance Notes, 1-2, 1959-61, 59-63.
47. B. Smalley, The study of the Bible in the middle ages, Oxford 1962<sup>2</sup>, p.62.
48. See Rogers, p.7.
49. M. de Riquer, La lírica de los trovadores, Barcelona 1948, p.51.

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50. Marcabru XVIII 43-8 cf Proverbs 6, 7 and 8  
especially 7.22-3 and 25-7  
XVIII ms C st.11, ms M st.8 cf Ecclesiastes 7.27 and 9.3  
XVIII 13-18 cf Proverbs 6.27 and Ecclesiasticus  
9.7  
XVIII 57-60 cf Proverbs 6.24-6, 5.3-5 and 7.5  
XVIII 19-24 cf Proverbs 6.12-14 and 8.8 (Wilhelm)  
and Isaiah 3.16 (Errante).
51. 'conserva fili mi praecepta patris tui et ne dimittas legem matris  
tuae' (6.20).
52. 'ut custodiant te a muliere mala et a blanda lingua extraneae'  
(6.24).
53. Wilhelm, p.78.
54. Quoted in Economou, p.18. The passage is taken from De miseria  
humanae conditionis.
55. See Rogers, p.5.
56. See Charles, p.345.
57. See also Ezekiel 16.25-40 and 23.2-49 where the association of  
whoredom with heresy is amplified.
58. See J. Hastings, A Dictionary of the Bible, 2nd edition by F.C.  
Grant and H.H. Rowley, Edinburgh 1963, p.365.
59. See Rogers, pp.2-5 and compare Villon: Poésies, ed. P. Michel,  
Paris 1972, 'Double ballade' lines 5-8, Le Roman de Troie, ed.  
L. Constans, Paris 1909, lines 18044-48, and Lo Breviari d'Amor,  
lines 34048-57.
60. PL 201:704.
61. See also Ferrante, Woman as image, p.22.
62. Woman as image, p.21. See also M.T. d'Alverny, 'Comment les  
théologiens et les philosophes voient la femme', Cahiers de  
Civilisation Médiévale, 20, 1977, 105-131.

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63. Compare  

Poem	XLIV lines 5-8	cf	Proverbs 7.21-3
	XLIV lines 29-32	cf	Proverbs 12.4
	XLIV lines 39-40	cf	Proverbs 5.5-6
	XLIV lines 41-2	cf	Proverbs 6.26 and Ecclesiasticus 9.6
	XLIV lines 45-8	cf	Ecclesiasticus 9.2-5 and Ecclesiastes 7.26
64. Paterson, p.38.
65. See Errante, p.203 on knowledge of Proverbs 7 in the middle ages.
66. PL 210:451. See also L.T. Topsfield, Chrétien de Troyes, Cambridge 1981, pp.2-3.
67. M. Lazar, Amour courtois et 'fin'amors' dans la littérature du XII<sup>e</sup> siècle, Paris 1964, p.84.
68. See D. Nelson, 'Marcabru, prophet of fin'amors', Studies in Philology, 79, 1982, 227-41.
69. Compare Poems XXXIX lines 50-56, XXXVI lines 25-30 and IV lines 31-36.
70. R. Nelli, L'Érotique des troubadours, 2 vols., Paris 1974, I, 240.
71. Troubadours and Love, p.84.
72. Troubadours and Love, p.85.
73. See, for example, the arguments of E. Gilson, La Théologie mystique de Saint Bernard, Paris 1934, pp.193-216, Lazar, Amour courtois, pp.47-55 and 80-85, and Nelson, 'Prophet'.
74. See, for example, Poems XIII, XXXI, XXXII and XXXVII.
75. See Poem XIII lines 9-32, Cortesianen, XXXII lines 37-63, XXXVII lines 31-42.
76. Ricketts, p.179.
77. Compare 'Doas cuidas' lines 53-54.



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78. L.T. Topsfield, 'Joïs, Amors and Fin'amors in the poetry of Jaufre Rudel', Neuphilologische Mitteilungen, 71, 1970 (294, note 1).
79. R. Guiette, 'Symbolisme et "senefiance" au moyen âge', in Questions de littérature, Ghent 1960, p.39.
80. M.R. Jung, Études sur le poème allégorique en France au moyen âge, Bern 1971; M.W. Bloomfield, 'Symbolism in medieval literature', Modern Philology, 56, 1958, 73-81 (77).
81. Guiette, pp.48-9; Jung, p.11 and Topsfield, Chrétien, p.302.